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Message Text

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SCS:JHUGHES (INFO)
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---------- 094030
R 081653Z JAN 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, MA (REPPAS, GEORGE)
SUBJECT: REPPAS CASE

REFS: (A) TANANARIVE 1234; (B) TANANARIVE 0016

1. PHILIP BRAWNER, REPPAS' FATHER-IN-LAW, TELEPHONED AF/E DIRECTOR COOTE ON JANUARY 6 TO DISCUSS CASE. BRAWNER SUGGESTED THAT NOW THAT AMBASSADOR MENDENHALL IS RETURNING TO MADAGASCAR IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO MAKE FOLLOW-UP CALL ON GENERAL RAMANANTSOA. HE RECOMMENDS THAT AMBASSADOR STRESS THAT THE CASE HAS BEEN OVERBLOWN-- REPPAS AND FELLOW INVESTORS WANTED TO HELP MALAGASY. ALSO, HE BELIEVES IT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO STRESS AGAIN THE VOLUNTARY PAROLE SCHEME SO AS TO LESSEN APPEAR-ANCE THAT REPPAS WOULD BE GETTING SPECIAL FAVOR IF RELEASED EARLY. IN LIGHT OF HIS DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, BRAWNER NOW BELIEVES THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT REPPAS WILL BE RELEASED BEFORE HALF OF HIS TERM HAS BEEN SERVED, BUT HOPES THAT EMBASSY WILL MAKE ALL-OUT EFFORT AT THAT TIME TO SECURE RELEASE, IF REPPAS STILL HELD. IN THIS CONNECTION BRAWNER HOPES THAT EMBASSY WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO ENSURE THAT SUPREME COURT APPEAL HAS BEEN HEARD BY THEN SO THAT GOMR WILL NOT BE ABLE
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TO USE IT AS EXCUSE FOR FURTHER DELAYING DECISION ON

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EXPULSION. BRAWNER COMMENTED THAT HE FOUND AMBASSADOR MENDENHALL SINCERE AND WAS VERY PLEASED WITH HIS EFFORTS

ON BEHALF OF REPPAS. COOTE PROMISED TO CONVEY BRAWNER'S THOUGHTS TO MENDENHALL AND TO REPORT LATTER'S REACTION.

2. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S ESTIMATE AS TO WHETHER FOLLOW-UP CALL ON RAMANANTSOA WOULD BE USEFUL NOW (ASSUMING RAZAFINDRATOVO HAS NOT DELIVERED RESPONSE TO EARLIER APPROACH IN MEANTIME) OR WHETHER IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL HALF OF REPPAS' SENTENCE HAS BEEN SERVED TO AGAIN CONTACT RAMANANTSOA.

3. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION DEPARTMENT OFFICER BRIEFED BRAD JEFFRIES ON DECEMBER 26 INCIDENT. JEFFRIES NOTED THAT REPPAS HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO INCREASED HARASSMENT RECENTLY. IN ADDITION TO DEPRIVING REPPAS OF FOOD AND WATER ON DECEMBER 26, PRISON AUTHORITIES APPARENTLY PLACED INMATE REPPAS ENGAGED TO CLEAN HIS CELL IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR HELPING HIM AND WARNED OTHER PRISONERS NOT TO ASSIST HIM. JEFFRIES AND DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S VIEWS OF REASONS FOR INCREASED HOSTILITY BY PRISON AUTHORITIES TOWARD REPPAS. JEFFRIES ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT IN DEALINGS WITH GOMR EMBASSY NOT LABEL REPPAS' DEPARTURE FROM PRISON AS ESCAPE ATTEMPT BUT RATHER AS PROTEST AGAINST TREATMENT. REPPAS REPORTEDLY LEFT PRISON DURING DAY WHEN HE COULD NOT REASONABLY HAVE EXPECTED NOT RPT NOT TO BE APPREHENDED. JEFFRIES FEARS THAT GOMR MAY USE REPPAS DEPARTURE AS EXCUSE NOT TO GRANT PARDON WHEN HALF OF SENTENCE HAS BEEN SERVED.
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